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ABSTRACT

The school district in this study, "Special School District" (SSD), is under the administration of the Louisiana State Department of education and thus classified as a Louisiana state agency required to conform to the mandate that state agencies have performance indicators, including one for customer satisfaction. For the SSD, customer satisfaction was defined as the satisfaction of the school site staff with the administration. A 42-item survey was developed to assess this satisfaction. Items were drawn from a review of staff satisfaction surveys, and all items were written in the positive direction using a Likert-type scale so that the greater the satisfaction with the administration, the higher the rating. The survey was reviewed at one site and by one central/district administrator to delete redundant items and make adjustments in wording. Data from 157 teacher respondents (not a complete set for each item) the first year were subjected to factor analysis. Six factors accounting for 67.39% of the total variance emerged, but the literature and item review supported three of these factors, which accounted for 66.14% of the variance. Psychometric findings provide support for the construct validity and internal consistency of the scores derived from the survey. (Contains 2 tables and 14 references.) (SLD)

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RUNNING HEAD: Staff Satisfaction with Administration

ED 471 344

Staff Satisfaction with Administration as a Measure of Consumer Satisfaction

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the

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Abstract

Special School District (SSD) is an educational service agency, is classified as a state agency and required to meet most requirements for state agencies. The development of the survey in this study resulted from a requirement that state agencies have performance indicators, specifically one for customer satisfaction. For SSD, customer satisfaction was defined as satisfaction of the school site staff with administration.

A 42-item survey was developed. Items were initially drawn from a review of staff satisfaction surveys, including those from other government agencies, then, adapted for SSD. It attempted also to capture major characteristics associated with administration both on-site and central/district office.

All Items were written in the positive direction using a Likert-type scale of one being strongly disagree and six, strongly agree. Zero responses were allowed. The greater the satisfaction with administration, the higher the rating indicated on the survey.

To assess content and face validity, the survey was shared with one site and one central/district administrator. Based on their input, redundant items were deleted and adjustments made in wording.

To assess construct validity, data from the first year were subjected to factor analysis using principal component extraction with oblique promax rotation. Using eigenvalues greater than unity, six factors accounting 67.39% of the total variance emerged. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the survey was .974. Factors V and VI accounted for less than 3% of the variance and did not seem stable. A four-factor solution was first considered.

Yet the literature and item review supported three factors. These factors accounted for 66.14% of the variance, with a reliability coefficient of 0.972. Similar reliability coefficients were found for the factors.

Psychometric findings provide support for the construct validity and internal consistency of the scores derived from the survey.

Staff Satisfaction with Administration as a Measure of Consumer Satisfaction

Introduction

Movement toward an outcome or results orientation has grown in government and education (Government Performance and Results Act, 1993; No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). Public accountability for results has been driven by the adoption of strategic planning and subsequent development of operational plans, which specifically include performance indicators. According to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993: "Some elements of GPRA are familiar as they [can be] found in other federal management reforms such as Management by Objectives, Zero-based Budgeting, or Program Planning and Budgeting System. In contrast to these short-lived management reforms, GPRA is a law with specific planning and reporting requirements. The requirements include a five-year strategic plan, an annual performance plan and an annual performance report" (http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/gpra/start.html).

Context of the Study

Special School District is an educational service agency that is under the administration of the Louisiana State Department of Education. It is classified as a state agency and must meet most requirements placed on state agencies. SSD is actually composed of SSD#1 and SSD#2. SSD#1 provides special education services to students with disabilities in state operated facilities for mental health, developmental disabilities and juvenile corrections. SSD#2 provides all educational services in juvenile correctional facilities whose physical plants are owned by private entities.

The requirement that prompted the development of the survey described in this study was that state agencies in Louisiana, through their operational plans, include indicators of performance (see Performance Based Budgeting, http://www.infolouisiana.com/opb/pbb/pbb.html). For the fiscal year 2000 operational plan, one required indicator of performance was customer satisfaction. Operationalizing customer satisfaction, however, was left to the discretion of the individual agencies.

Therefore, in the SSD#1 operational plan the objective for customer satisfaction was stated as: "To provide leadership and oversight that results in a consumer satisfaction rating of 85%." (SSD#1 Operational Plan, FY 2000). The performance indicator for this objective was the consumer "satisfaction rating of administration."

Definition Development

The rationale for including customer satisfaction was that those using government services are customers, thus their reaction to or satisfaction with the service provided is important. Customer satisfaction, then, was aimed at the recipient of the product or service. According to Bailey (2000), "a customer is a person who *buys* goods or services and expects his or her expressed preference to be met with regard to the product or service being purchased" (p. 1, emphasis added). The key word in this definition is *buy*.

In a government agency the recipient is usually the one who actually receives the service; in other words, a "welfare recipient" would be the one who receives the monetary service or a "food stamp recipient" would be the one receiving the coupons or food credit card. In a school district the recipient is usually defined as the student.

Special School District, however, as the name implies is special - it differs from the traditional conception of a school district. First, the student population is fluid because the school programs are provided in mental health, developmental disabilities, and correctional facilities. Second, the sites are geographically distant both from each other and the central office. Sites are situated throughout an entire state. The final issue is whether the student or the parent is the actual customer. A case can be made that the parent is the taxpayer, thus, "paying" for government service.

Using Bailey's definition in the strictest sense of the word, neither parents nor students *buy* education. Therefore, given the concerns about the structure of SSD, customer satisfaction was examined from a different perspective.

That perspective was to ask who, besides students, "consumes service" in a school district? Besides students, schools are comprised of the administrators and the direct and support service staff.

Examining the administrative role, it can be argued that these personnel provide such functions or services as planning, leading, organizing, supervising, and controlling. Owens (1987) wrote, "Administration has been defined as working with and through people to achieve organizational goals" (p. 281). Consequently, administrator style and actions used in reaching these goals affects staff perceptions of and feelings about the administrator, the workplace, and their general morale. Using this perspective, school staff were considered to be the recipients or consumers of the services of administration. Administration was defined as both school site administrators and central or district office administrators.

Instrument Development

In deciding how to measure staff satisfaction with administration, an examination of the literature was undertaken. Keying on the terms *satisfaction* and *administration* resulted in information predominately related to job satisfaction and supervision. While this literature was helpful in a conceptual sense, little information was found that specifically examined how satisfied are school staff with the administrators' performance of their leadership, managerial, and supervisory roles (Howard & Frink, 1996; Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Perie, Baker & Whitener, 1997: Luce, 1998).

Therefore, to measure staff satisfaction with administration a 42-item survey was developed. Items were initially drawn from a global review of other staff satisfaction surveys, including those used by other government agencies. Items were, then, adapted to reflect the unique nature of SSD while trying to capture major areas related to administration both on-site and from the central/district office.

As the Staff Satisfaction with Administration Survey was being developed, five categories of administrative influence were conceived. Items were assigned to one of these categories or factors. The first was leadership; these were items that related to actions and behaviors conveying vision, addressing participatory problem solving, and the free flow of information and communication. The second category was labeled operational control. That is, items related to the policies and procedures - the operations of the school. The third category was administrative support. Administrators assign workloads, provide the materials, supplies, and equipment, and influence the work relations among staff. Fourth was the category of promotion and professional development. In this area, administrators control opportunities for training and

professional growth and use of new skills. Finally, there were items considered to measure general satisfaction. Items in this category identified appreciation or worth, as well as compensation qualities.

To assess content and face validity, the survey form was shared with two administrators - one site and one central/district administrator. Based on their input and feedback, items were deleted that were considered to be redundant, adjustments were made in wording, and shifts in factor assignments were made.

Items were all written in the positive direction. A Likert-type scale of one (1) to six (6) - one being strongly disagree and six, strongly agree - was used. A zero response was allowed for don't know or not applicable. The greater the satisfaction with administration, the higher the rating indicated on the survey.

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the psychometric properties of the instrument developed to measure staff satisfaction with administration. Also examined was the initial structure of factors, which were arbitrarily assigned, based on expected administrative characteristics and outcomes. Items were grouped according to areas considered to be important to the administration, management and operation of a school site.

Method

Participants

Surveys were distributed to the site administrators. They, in turn, distributed the surveys to their site staff. Staff were given an option of returning completed surveys directly to the second author or through the school's group return process. Survey

distribution was during mid to late October of 1999, with return requested by early December.

Although SSD#1 and SSD#2 personnel were surveyed, for purposes of this study only SSD#1 was examined. SSD#2 was newly established in August of 1999. There was concern, therefore, that the inexperience of the administrative staff might bias analysis of the instrument. The response rate for SSD#1 was 52.7%, representing the return of 157 of the 298 surveys distributed.

Of the 157 respondents, 121 answered the race/ethnicity item. Results indicated the composition of the sample was -57% White (non-Hispanic), 39% Black, 3% Native American, with less than 1% indicating Asian/Pacific Islander and Other. Eighty percent of the respondents answered the item about gender. Of those responding, 74% were female, 26% male.

Statistical Analysis

All analyses were performed using SPSS 11.0. The factor structure of the Staff Satisfaction with Administration Survey was investigated using factor analytic techniques. A principal component analysis with oblique promax rotation was used to determine the structure of the 42 items.

Results

Using the eigenvalue greater than unity, six factors emerged accounting for 67.39% of the total variance. The magnitude of the eigenvalues was 22.03, 2.07, 1.61,

1.41, 1.26, and 1.04. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was .974. The item factor loadings are shown in Table 1.

Factor VI consisted of only two items accounting for about one percent of the variance. Similarly, Factor V had four items accounting for about two percent of the variance. Factor IV had six items and accounted for 3.35% of the variance. Therefore, a four-factor solution was examined. Yet, after a review of the items and comparison to the literature, it was determined that a three-factor solution should be explored.

Item total correlations along with factor pattern matrix coefficients were used to determine the final form of the Staff Satisfaction with Administration Survey. Factor pattern matrix coefficients greater than |.40| were used to determine the relationship of items to the factors. Criteria used to determine the number of factors to retain included (a) eigenvalue greater than unity, (b) percentage of variance explained, and (c) scree test.

Thirty-three items emerged using the three-factor rotation. The eigenvalues for these factors were 18.44, 6.05, and 4.21. Total variance accounted for equaled 66.13%, only slightly less than the six-factor solution. The factor pattern matrix coefficients, eigenvalues, and percentage of variance explained by each factor in the final factor structure are presented in Table 2.

Internal consistency of the scores was evaluated. The alpha coefficient for each factor was .969, .910 and .905, respectively. The reliability coefficient for this rotation was .972. These results provide support for the construct validity and internal consistency of the scores derived from the survey.

Discussion

The Staff Satisfaction with Administration Survey was originally developed based on a conception of administration as including functions related to leadership, operational control, administrative support, promotion and professional development, and general satisfaction. The survey included 42 items; there were nine items representing leadership, seven for operational control, ten for administrative support, seven for promotion and professional development, and nine for general satisfaction.

This study did not support the factor structure originally conceptualized, although it did generally support the instrument's psychometric properties. Examining the thirty-three items in the three-factor rotation resulted in identifying them as leadership, workplace conditions, and morale.

School administrators have been characterized as the leaders - superintendents lead the district, principals lead the school. As leaders they move the district/school toward the goals set. To accomplish this they must motivate, supervise, direct, and manage the human and fiscal resources. Luce (1998) said, "Educational administrators need to concern themselves with how a high level of teacher motivation can be aroused, directed and sustained...encourage teachers to new things, to take on new challenges, and which inspire teachers to achieve excellence" (p. 1). Perie et al., on the other hand, reported that "of the teachers who reported being dissatisfied with teaching as a career, the majority specified concerns with inadequate support from administration" (p. 4).

Items in Factor one are considered to reflect the leadership dimension of administration. There are 15 Items on the survey that measure this dimension. These

include: #7 - Overall, my principal/supervisor communicates clearly with me; #16 – Employees are encouraged to participate in making decisions that affect their work; and # 39 - Employees are encouraged to develop creative ideas, processes, or products.

Factor two was identified as workplace conditions and includes 10 items. Specific variables identified by Perie et al. (1997) included workplace conditions and included such descriptors as administrative support, availability of resources, amount of paper work and routine duties. They also reported that adding workplace conditions improved the prediction of career satisfaction "over four times" (p. 48). Similarly, Howard found that "satisfaction with supervision...appears to influence general job satisfaction" (1996, p. 11). Finally, Klecker and Loadman (1999) reported that job satisfaction as reported by teacher education graduates was affected by general work conditions. Examples of items on the survey for the workplace conditions factor include: #4 - I have the equipment I need to do my job (computers, software, paper, pens, staplers, etc.); #12 - My workload is reasonable, allowing me to accomplish my work in a quality manner; and #21 - The level of physical security at my work location is satisfactory.

Gorton (1976) wrote, "Satisfaction and morale are attitudinal variables which reflect positive or negative feelings about a particular situation or person(s). ... The state of one's morale reflects the extent of his satisfaction with a situation or person" (p. 165). Perie et al. (1997) stated, "Job satisfaction is an affective reaction to an individual's work situation" (p. 2). Thus, Factor three was identified as morale. It has eight items. Examples of items in this factor are - #9 - Overall I am satisfied with my job; #30 - I am kept well informed about important things going on in SSD; and #41 - There is mutual trust between SSD employees and administrators.

The Staff Satisfaction with Administration Survey is now a 33-item form. To test the factor structure, the revised instrument must be tested. Because of the continuous nature of the consumer satisfaction indicator in SSD, the next step is to test the model and instrument with both SSD#1 and SSD#2. Another possible step is to customize it to be used in a public school district.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) in their Special Education Teaching Conditions Initiative identifies administrative support and working conditions among factors that affect retention of special educators. They state,

> In the current educational climate, special education teachers often feel unsupported, unprepared, overwhelmed, and disempowered. Too often they are asked to teach in situations that make them ineffective. . . . Special education teachers are also faltering under the overwhelming amount of paperwork they are expected to complete. . . Another problem that negatively affects the effectiveness of special education teachers is lack of resources. Unfortunately, special education is still, too often, an unwanted challenge. Special education teachers are forced to make do with inadequate and/or out-of-date materials, and they meet resistance when procuring general education books and resources for their students. . . .Special education teachers also say that lack of administrative support makes their job more difficult. . . . Poor teacher working conditions contribute to the high rate of special educators leaving the field, teacher burnout, and substandard quality of education for students with special needs (http://www.cec.sped.org/spotlight/cond/bf_overview.html).

While CEC specifically identified special educators, there is reason to believe these same issues could apply to most educators. Looking at the areas identified - paperwork, resources, administrative support, working conditions - it is possible to note that administrators do have some control over the job design (Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, and Harniss, 2001).

Mayer, Mullins, Moore, and Ralph (2000) in their report *Monitoring School Quality: An Indicators Report* identified 13 indicators. In identifying School Leadership as one of the indicators, they write:

> Leadership provides a unifying focus, the impetus to work toward school goals, and a locus for decision making along the way. In quality schools, an individual or group of individuals takes responsibility to provide school leadership, assemble a faculty with skills to achieve school goals, provide direct support for those teachers, and make teaching and learning a main preoccupation around which everything else evolves (p. 38).

Yet, in this report they acknowledge that sources of data on school leadership are of poor quality.

Thus, the importance of having an instrument to measure staff satisfaction with administration lies in the information it can provide to administrators. It can serve to gather information in a feedback loop for administrators. Based on the literature on staff satisfaction, administrators - especially site administrators - influence personnel perceptions and reactions. Staff satisfaction, in turn, has been linked to job performance. Proponents of accountability in government and education have strongly made the case that job performance and student results are intrinsically linked.

Consequently, in this era of increased accountability for the results of students, administrators need to have numerous tools to improve their practice and results. Using the Staff Satisfaction with Administration Survey may be one tool to assist them.

Table 1

Initial Rotated Factor Pattern Matrix for the Special School District survey

	Factor					
Item	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
40	**.94**	.122	.01	-.11	-.07	-.03
23	**.94**	-.158	.09	-.06	.08	.06
7	**.85**	-.21	-.02	.27	-.02	.02
38	**.84**	.12	.13	-.15	.03	-.07
35	**.84**	-.08	.09	.05	.03	.04
2	**.82**	.24	-.24	.02	-.14	.07
17	**.82**	-.24	.19	.08	.07	.07
39	**.71**	.43	-.19	-.25	-.08	-.17
42	**.70**	.31	.16	-.25	-.08	-.17
33	**.63**	.28	.05	-..08	.07	.05
16	**.52**	.31	-.04	.06	.00	.16
24	**.50**	.09	.06	.26	.07	-.03
11	**.47**	.16	-.14	.33	.02	.08
28	-.06	**.86**	.16	.00	-.27	.12
19	.09	**.80**	-.12	-.08	-.03	.06
41	.16	**.76**	.00	-.07	.00	.00
34	-.06	**.57**	.24	-.02	.19	.00
9	-.02	**.54**	-.12	.19	.35	-.09
22	.19	**.48**	.08	.09	.06	.18
30	.03	**.47**	.17	.09	.01	.16
37	.22	.36	.17	.33	-.13	-.23
36	.15	.35	.29	.27	-.08	.00
27	-.05	-.08	**.93**	.08	-.06	-.04
31	-.02	.08	**.78**	.18	.00	-.17
20	.14	.00	**.74**	-.02	.00	.03

	Factor					
10	.26	-.11	**.69**	-.16	.20	.11
21	-.25	.29	**.66**	.00	-.08	.27
29	.08	.17	**.62**	.10	-.02	.02
25	.26	.28	.39	-.16	.11	.07
4	-.22	-.01	.13	**.83**	-.07	.11
5	.00	.13	-.09	**.75**	-.02	-.25
1	.11	-.17	.28	**.62**	-.09	-.12
14	-.08	.05	.19	**.62**	.11	.15
3	.50	-.18	-.15	**.59**	-.18	.13
13	.37	.24	-.06	**.46**	-.08	-.02
18	-.15	.06	-.11	-.22	**.92**	.28
26	.13	-.34	.15	-.02	**.86**	-.14
32	.05	.08	.15	.03	**.68**	-.22
6	-.08	.23	-.22	.37	**.55**	.12
15	.11	.19	.00	.30	.34	-.02
8	.01	.18	.02	-.07	.03	**.81**
12	.26	-.16	.13	.27	.12	**.46**
Eigenvalue	22.03	2.07	1.61	1.41	1.26	1.04
Percentage of variance explained	52.44	4.94	3.84	3.35	1.75	1.07

Table 2

Final Rotated Factor Pattern Matrix for the Special School District survey

	Factor		
Item	I	II	III
40	**.96**	-.08	.02
23	**.91**	.14	-.14
7	**.89**	.11	-.14
38	**.89**	.00	.03
17	**.87**	.23	-.20
35	**.85**	.18	-.08
2	**.81**	-.23	.19
39	**.80**	-.28	.31
42	**.7[illegible]**	-.15	.17
33	**.66**	.09	.21
24	**.64**	.16	.13
16	**.53**	.11	.24
3	**.49**	.03	.16
11	**.48**	.17	.19
13	**.43**	.11	.38
27	-.09	**.85**	.00
10	.27	**.81**	-.26
20	.22	**.75**	-.18
31	-.02	**.74**	.18
21	-.16	**.72**	.08
29	-.01	**.72**	.18
12	.18	**.64**	-.11
14	.04	**.64**	.18
4	-.13	**.61**	.16
32	.16	**.49**	.13

	Factor		
28	-.03	.02	**.80**
19	.12	-.18	**.79**
41	.12	-.03	**.72**
9	.12	.11	**.65**
34	-.09	.43	**.54**
30	-.08	.39	**.52**
22	.19	.27	**.51**
6	.00	.37	**.44**
Eigenvalue	18.44	1.99	.139
Percentage of variance explained	55.87	6.05	4.21

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